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1963

FEBRUARY 6, 1963

memorandum to Governor Stevenson

I PREPARED THE ATTACHED MEMO IN AN EFFORT TO REFRESH MY
OWN RECOLLECTIONS ON THE EVOLUTION OF U.S. CUBAN POLICY (ORAL)
FROM EISENHOWER ON. IT MAY BE OF SOME INTEREST TO YOU.

C. F.

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FEBRUARY 6, 1963

MEMORANDUM ON CUBAN POLICY

IT HAS ALWAYS APPEARED PROBABLE THAT THE REPUBLICANS WOULD RENEW THEIR PRESSURE ON CUBA AS SOON AS THE OCTOBER EUPHORIA WORE OFF, AND IT SEEMS THAT MOMENT HAS JUST ABOUT ARRIVED. THE OPPOSITION IS STILL FEELING ITS WAY, BUT I DON'T THINK IT IS GOING TO LET UP.

THE AREA MOST LIKELY TO BE CANVASSED, IT SEEMS TO ME, CENTERS ON THE POLICY LAID DOWN BY EISENHOWER IN 1960 AND MORE OR LESS CARRIED ON BY THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION. THIS REVOLVES AROUND A STATEMENT MADE BY IKE ON JULY 9, 1960, IN WHICH HE SAID THE U.S. WOULD NOT "PERMIT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIME DOMINATED BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE".

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? GENERALLY SPEAKING, IT HAS BEEN TAKEN TO MEAN JUST WHAT IT SEEMS TO SAY: THAT IS, A COMMUNIST-RUN GOVERNMENT IN CUBA IS INTOLERABLE TO THE U.S.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY HAS BEEN LESS BLUNT THAN IKE IN HIS OWN FORMULATIONS. ON FEBRUARY 3, 1961 HE SAID:

"COMMUNIST DOMINATION IN THIS HEMISPHERE CAN NEVER BE NEGOTIATED. . . . WE ARE PLEDGED TO FREE THE AMERICAS OF ALL SUCH FOREIGN DOMINATION AND ALL TYRANNY".

AND ON APRIL 20, 1961, HE ADDED:

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"SHOULD IT EVER APPEAR THAT THE INTER-AMERICAN DOCTRINE OF NON-INTERFERENCE MERELY CONCEALS OR EXCUSES A POLICY OF NON-ACTION -- IF THE NATIONS OF THIS HEMISPHERE SHOULD FAIL TO MEET THEIR COMMITMENTS AGAINST OUTSIDE COMMUNIST PENETRATION -- THEN I WANT IT CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS GOVERNMENT WILL NOT HESITATE IN MEETING ITS PRIMARY OBLIGATIONS, WHICH ARE TO THE SECURITY OF OUR NATION.

"SHOULD THAT TIME EVER COME, WE DO NOT INTEND TO BE LECTURED ON 'INTERVENTION' BY THOSE WHOSE CHARACTER WAS STAMPED FOR ALL TIME ON THE BLOODY STREETS OF BUDAPEST".

ALL THIS HAS LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT AT SOME POINT THE U. S. WAS PREPARED TO DO SOMETHING (UNSPECIFIED) TO ELIMINATE COMMUNIST DOMINATION OF CUBA.

ON SEPTEMBER 3, 1962, THE PRESIDENT REDEFINED OUR POLICY AS FOLLOWS:

"BUT LET ME MAKE THIS CLEAR ONCE AGAIN: IF AT ANY TIME THE COMMUNIST BUILDUP IN CUBA WERE TO ENDANGER OR INTERFERE WITH OUR SECURITY IN ANY WAY, INCLUDING OUR BASE AT GUANTANAMO, OUR PASSAGE TO THE PANAMA CANAL, OUR MISSILE AND SPACE ACTIVITIES AT CAPE CANAVERAL, OR THE LIVES OF AMERICAN CITIZENS IN THIS COUNTRY, OR IF CUBA SHOULD EVER ATTEMPT TO EXPORT ITS AGGRESSIVE PURPOSES BY FORCE OR THE THREAT OF FORCE AGAINST ANY NATION IN THIS HEMISPHERE, OR BECOME AN OFFENSIVE MILITARY BASE OF SIGNIFICANT CAPACITY FOR THE SOVIET UNION, THEN THIS COUNTRY WILL DO WHATEVER MUST BE DONE TO PROTECT ITS OWN SECURITY AND THAT OF ITS ALLIES".

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ALTHOUGH IT HAS LARGELY GONE UNREMARKED, I THINK A CAREFUL READING OF THE ABOVE WOULD INDICATE A MODIFICATION OF SORTS: WE ARE NO LONGER TALKING ABOUT INTERVENTION TO STAMP OUT COMMUNIST INFLUENCE, BUT ONLY TO ELIMINATE A MILITARY THREAT TO THE U. S. OR OTHER HEMISPHERE NATIONS.

BUT NOW THAT THE MISSILE-BOMBER THREAT HAS BEEN ELIMINATED, WE ARE BACK TO THE EARLIER DEBATE. AND, FROM THE LATEST REMARKS OF SECRETARY RUSK, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT AT LEAST SOME MODIFICATION OF THE SEPT. 3RD PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT IS BEING DEVELOPED.

IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS ON "MEET THE PRESS", MR. RUSK SAID ON JANUARY 27, 1963:

"THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT LOOK UPON A SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN CUBA AS A NORMAL CONDITION. IT MUST BE OUR POLICY AS INDICATED AT PUNTA DEL ESTE IN JANUARY (1962) THAT THE PENETRATION OF THIS HEMISPHERE BY A MARXIST-LENINIST REGIME, BACKED FROM THE OUTSIDE, IS UNACCEPTABLE IN THE HEMISPHERE, SO THAT AS A MATTER OF POLICY, WE MUST ANTICIPATE THAT THESE FORCES WOULD BE REMOVED AND THAT CUBA SOME DAY WILL REJOIN THE HEMISPHERE AS A LOYAL PART OF IT".

SECRETARY RUSK ALSO SAID ON THE SAME OCCASION, "SO LONG AS THERE IS A SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN CUBA, THEN THERE IS AN ABNORMAL SITUATION WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE A MATTER OF GREAT CONCERN TO THE HEMISPHERE AND THE UNITED STATES".

"THE NEXT STAGE IS TO FIND WAYS AND MEANS OF REDUCING THE CONTINUED SOVIET PRESENCE AND THE CONTINUED PROPAGANDA AND OTHER THREATS TO THIS HEMISPHERE."

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SO WE SEEM TO BE BACK WHERE WE STARTED, WITH THE REPUBLICANS DEMANDING UNSPECIFIED ACTION, AND THE ADMINISTRATION INTIMATING THAT IT HAS POSSIBLE FURTHER STEPS IN MIND.

TO RECAPITULATE: EVER SINCE THE EISENHOWER DECLARATION ON JULY 9, 1961, THERE HAS BEEN, AND STILL REMAINS, AN UNRESOLVED QUESTION: IS THE U.S. REALLY PREPARED TO USE FORCE AGAINST CUBA FOR REASONS OTHER THAN SELF-DEFENSE OR DEFENSE OF ANOTHER HEMISPHERIC NATION?